

Four-Alarm FIRESIGNAL

-- A newsletter of, about, and for The Firesign Theatre...and their loyal fans

Electronic Four-Alarm FIRESIGNAL #25 (Electronic #3)

FAAlaFal is published thrice yearly in fire sign months (April, August and December) as a public service or aficionados and dear friends of The Firesign Theatre by Elayne Wechsler-Chaput, "The Firehead Head," from the East Coast Derisational Hindquarters of the Natural Surrealist Party, mailing address 1747 65th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11204, Internet login ID firehead@panix.com, CompuServe ID 72672,2714, and Prodigy ID PPCD02B. FAAlaFal is free of charge (for now - see "Worker") and freely reproducible, and all letters, news clippings and articles, FT-related creativity, requests for archives and press lists, and any other material may be sent to me c/o the above addresses. Copywrite 1994 Pen-Elayne Enterprises; hard copy version printed and mailed by Roger Snyder at The Print Shop in NY; electronic distribution by Monrovia Communications, Monrovia, MD. Happy Yule, y'all!

No. 25 of ? TABLE OF CONTENTS DECEMBER, 1994

- [[1]] **THIS IS WORKER SPEAKING:** Words from Elayne, Our Founder
- [[2]] **RUMORS BEHIND THE NEWS:** The latest on the 4 or 5 guys
- [[3]] **REVIEW:** Jerry Sterns attended the Midwest Radio Theatre Workshop and lived to tell about it! SEE: Phil Proctor's methods of getting sound effects Just Right! SEE: David Ossman direct like a house afire! SEE: Just what the heck's been going on here for the last fifteen years!
- [[4]] **DEAR FRIENDS:** Zines galore! Elayne reviews whole bunches of Johann Gutenbergs' spiritual descendants; all the print that's fit for news.
- [[5]] **A PLEA FOR HELP:** Quiz questions requested as Richard Arnold attempts to build the perfect Firesign puzzle.
- [[6]] **ADVERTISEMENTS:**
 - ENTERTAINMENT TRADING CO.:** Cool Firesign Theatre goods -- tour jackets, t-shirts, hats, pickles, etc.
 - MORE SUGAR:** Audio and video tapes of Great Moments in Firesignage. Get reel!
 - SPARKS MEDIA:** More yet Different audio and video of the 4 or 5. Must-haves abound!
- [[7]] **POSTMARK: DEEP SPACE** -- Letters to the Editor
- [[8]] **"OH BLINDING LIGHT...":** Phil Proctor explains his secret power; will he use it for Good or Evil? And what does his mom think?
- [[9]] **SEE YOU ON THE FUNWAY...** It's a wrap; endnotes & stuff from Jamie, Your Electronic Editor.

[[1]] This Is Worker Speaking...

Where to begin? Remember the part of last issue's editorial where I mentioned that Jim Henry at Entertainment Trading Company, FAAlaFal's "angel" for our last two issues, had informed me that, if ETC didn't make back enough money to recoup its investment in FAAlaFal, we might find ourselves without a sponsor? Well, I'm afraid that's come to pass. I won't go into detail here about what led to this situation, disappointing all around; suffice it to say our printer, Roger Snyder, is still owed \$1200 for printing/shipping FAAlaFals #23 and 24, both of which mailed way later than they should have (as many of you know who saw the hard copy version of FAAlaFal #24 less than two months, or even one month, ago), all beyond my control. (By the way, I am still advertising ETC products, albeit with a large "caveat emptor," because I'd like to see Jim eventually pay Roger that \$1200.) You the readers have the right to know what's been going on with the financial status of this newsletter, which affects everything from its timeliness to its future.

And what is our future? Well, I've taken out a yearly-renewable bulk mail permit, which should save us a bundle in mailing costs with all the "cluster" and ZIP+4 discounts we're due; I'll let you know the exact costs next issue, after we've figured them all out. I'm hoping to keep it down to about \$5-600 a year for three

issues. Our printing costs, even with Roger's discount, run \$550 per 2000 copies of a 10-page issue (or \$1650 a year). That probably means a few thousand per year is needed to run this newsletter in hard copy form, assuming our mailing list will remain about the same, and factoring in things like Canadian/foreign mail, Federal Express expenses and charges for issues which come back with address corrections (and stamp donations are still welcome for remailings and non-bulk issues!).

There are several ways we can go. I've been urged to charge subscription money for FAAlaFal. I'm loath to do this, because during FAAlaFal's first run (admittedly with only 400 readers) I was able to receive enough donations of money and stamps that I was never in the red - ever. I suspect enough of you folks want Firesign-related news badly enough that you're willing to kick in for it, but I'm not certain any of us like the idea of some folks subsidizing others. Yet the fact that FAAlaFal, like the information it contains, has always been free has, in my opinion, been one of its major draws. I don't relish risking the loss of a great many subscribers (especially after I've just paid for the bulk mail permit!), as well as the loss of a way of getting information out to the greatest amount of interested fans possible, just because some folks can't or won't pay the piper.

I could do with a few angels, I dare say. The guys at More Sugar may be able to help foot some of this bill, but certainly not all of it. I could solicit ads, but I've always felt all Firesign-related info, including ads, ought to be free. Or I could take FAAlaFal totally electronic, only offering hard copy versions to those many

modemless people who send me SASEs (the way I've already started to do, to save print space, with overlong letters and review columns). If I were to choose this route it wouldn't be until next December (issue #28), when the permit expires, so I'd need a cash infusion either way to keep us afloat until then.

I need a consensus, and I need it quickly. E-Mail me at any of my electronic addresses above, or "snail mail" me as soon as you can, and you tell me where you think our newsletter should go. I can tell you right now, I don't see my personal financial situation improving; I have less and less disposable income, and as I'm currently planning a family that little amount will continue to diminish. Four-Alarm FIRESIGNal is fun, and I love keeping in touch with the 4or5 and the fans, but I obviously can't make it a priority any more. I have no problem putting the information together. I'm an organizer - it's what I do for a living, I enjoy doing it, and I'm good at it. If I were interested in dealing with fundraising or other financial aspects of running this, I'd have become an accountant like just about everyone else in my family. If you want my personal opinion, going fully electronic would incur the least amount of financial strain on me - zero, in fact. I will continue to write and send the newsletter in pieces to Jamie Schrupf to amass properly, and he'll continue to send FAlaFals out to the WELL, CompuServe and the alt.comedy.firesgn-thtre newsgroup, as well as storing them at Monrovia.

If you're online but unsure of how to receive Electronic FAlaFal, E-Mail Jamie at moncomm@clark.net and he'll give you the lowdown. Niles Ritter (ritter@earthlink.net) will likely have updated by now the Firesign Theatre FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) available in a.c.f-t to include ways of "subscribing" to EFAlaFal. For WWW browsers, Jamie's URL is: <http://www.clark.net/pub/moncomm/firesign> But my main concern now has to be the folks receiving the hard copy version of FAlaFal. It's still a have vs. have-not world, and many people can't even afford (or don't want to buy) vehicles for the info superhighway, much less on-ramps. That doesn't make them any less enthusiastic for The Firesign Theatre, and any less deserving of receiving FAlaFal in the mail. Who knows, maybe someday Jim will once again be able to take on the financial burden of sponsoring FAlaFal. The view from my perch says this is unlikely, but anything can happen in the world of Firesign!

And speaking of self-contained worlds, The Firesign MUSH (Multiple User Shared Hallucination - like a role-playing game via computer), "The Old Same Place," is still in full swing! For more information, E-Mail Bill Benzel at SirWill1@voicenet.com; sez Sir Will, "Feel free to check out my new pad - it's Doctor Memory's Allocation Center (based mostly on the Eat-or-be-Eaten record)... Those of you with web browsers might want to visit my new homepage - The (Duke of) URL is: <http://www.voicenet.com/voicenet/homepages/SirWill1/index.html> "From it there is a direct link to the MUSH and you can download the zipped MUSH documentation directly."

I thank those who have contributed money and stamps for their generosity (especially Cat, John, Harold and Dia) during this time when we needed it the most, as well as everyone who helped out at our first-ever Firesign Video Watching and FAlaFal Addressing Party on December 11 to get this sucker stamped, labeled, bundled and mailed (if not received) by the end of 1994!

If you'd like to attend our April and August parties in 1995, give me a call - I'm in the book - or contact me with your phone number to arrange things; the more the merrier! This issue contains a long-promised plug for other small press publications, which bumps my new archival column (including eagerly-awaited info on Firesign video) to April, I'm afraid. Also herein is an announcement about a contest we'll be running over the next five issues... so we're not dead yet! In fact, I'm sure we're getting better! Alas, by the way, I cannot say the same for Gypsy Doctor - but while I fear kitty heaven looms closer for him, he's still hanging in there as of the writing of this editorial. He and his "brother" Phredd, my husband Steve, and all of you have been a tremendous comfort and inspiration to me during these trying times - thanks!

.....

[[2]] Rumors Behind the News

.....

* The planned tour for this past October/November has moved to February 1995. At press time, Dan Fiala at Dan Bean Presents was not able to confirm dates and venues (which may include Florida and other east coast stops), so I'm saving those SASEs you've been sending me since last issue for hard copy info on the tour, which I'll mail out as soon as I get the schedule (I will, of course, post the information in the Firesign newsgroup on the Internet as well). According to Phil Proctor, there will be new material included in this tour - stay tuned!

* MORE SUGAR (MS) has now added our mailing list to theirs, and most FAlaFal readers have by now no doubt seen their new Lodestone catalog, which was mailed the week of Thanksgiving. MS is part of Lodestone, so the catalog features other audio goodies (similar to Wireless or Signals), but Richard Fish and Tom Dukeman plan for the Firesign offerings to always be a prominently featured section of the catalog, the second, expanded version of which should be out in early 1995 (at which time we'll take a look at whether our finances permit FAlaFal's mailing list to expand to include other Firesign fans who've sent away for MS stuff but don't know of us yet). Richard and Tom confirm they hope their next two Firesign video acquisitions to be made available for commercial sale will be the Nick Danger CASE OF THE MISSING YOLK, done for Mike Nesmith's Pacific Arts in the mid-'80s (Nesmith and PP are currently in negotiations for the rights), and one of the most-requested Firesign-related features, J-MEN FOREVER with Proctor & Bergman! They are planning to re-release more Firesign audio and video product (including possibly some CDs that are no longer available from Mobile Fidelity - see our Archival column) as issues of rights become cleared up (and, of course, start-up capital permitting), and they also plan to expand into other areas of merchandising, such as publishing the Anythyng You Want To script, and possibly even T-shirts and such - stay tuned!

* David Ossman and Phil Proctor put in a great week at the 15th Annual Midwest Radio Theatre Workshop on October 17-22, and Jerry Stearns was there; his report appears elsewhere this issue!

* Phil Proctor and David Ossman have also mentioned "discussion of CD-Rom projects with 7th Level Productions in Glendale, producers of the upcoming PYTHON rom."

* On the CD front, FAlaFal correspondent Mark Weber learned from Claudette Kauffmann, Manager of Consumer Sales at Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs, that the following albums are still available in stores:

Waiting for the Electrician (MFCD 762)

I Think We're All Bozos on this Bus (MFCD 785)

Dear Friends (MFCD 758)

Fighting Clowns (MFCD 748)

Back From the Shadows (MFCD 2-747)

As previously reported, currently unavailable are:

How Can you be in two places at once... (MFCD 834)

Don't Crush That Dwarf (MFCD 880)

Says Kauffmann, "At this point we do not have any information about further FST releases and we do not know about future plans Sony may have." If you want to contact these folks directly, the address is Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, 105 Morris Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472; Phone 800/423-5759 or 707/829-0134, fax 707/829-3746 (E-Mail mofi@mofi.com). By the way, Mark also reminds me that the 2-record CD set Shoes for Industry! is not on MoFi, it's on Sony/Columbia/ Legacy; the catalog number is C2K 52736. As far as we know, this one's still available.

* Phil Austin and David Ossman recently did a radio commercial for Pierce Bus Lines (a local commuter bus between Tacoma & Seattle WA) as themselves (well, as PA and George Tirebiter), which received lots of airplay - they even got to plug Bozos as part of the ad! NPR Playhouse has listed the feed of David's wife Judith Walcutt's two-part series "Otherworld Media Presents". The 2 new programs are a pilot for a larger anthology series featuring the work of women writers. "The Phoenix" by Ursula K. Le Guin feeds March 19, 1995, and "The Waterfaucet Vision" by Gish Jen feeds March 26, 1995. Both shows are directed by Judith and feature Phil Proctor and Melinda Peterson in the cast. The adaptation of Raymond Chandler's "Goldfish" that David and Judith did with More Sugar's Richard Fish, is in the can and will premiere in '95 (both on the radio and, Richard hopes, as a commercially-available cassette/CD from MS) - more info next time. Richard did mention that "Goldfish" was done as a single-mike location production (a technique pioneered by TFT)!

* Phil Proctor's voice can also be heard on lots of cartoons of late, including "Carmen San Diego," playing a villain named Tim Burr, a Burmese policeman, in Burmese[!] and also employed to translate some Norwegian for another character (sez Phil, "I hope to be working this show more regularly, since it's ideally suited to my peculiar linguistic gifts"); as well as in various roles in "The Tick" (which also features the voice talents of ex-Monkee Mickey Dolenz). Phil also had a small role (bearded, no less) as an auctioneer on "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," broadcast Monday, November 28. Phil informed me, "The script is all about 'fat' and co-stars Susan Powter... the cast is very friendly and fun to work with, and I've worked with the director and some of the producers on other shows in the past." And Phil's beloved, Melinda Peterson, has just been cast as "Cookie" in Neil Simon's "Rumours" to be presented at the Sacramento Theatre Company, with rehearsals starting mid December for a Jan/Feb '95 run. Congratulations, Melinda - two plums in a row! "On the bad side of the ledger," continues PP, "both Phil A and I suffered personal

losses [recently]. Phil lost his father in San Diego after a long battle with emphysema, and my Aunt Betty passed away in Pennsylvania, not far from the Yoder family birthplace in Belleville, on her way back to Goshen where she was going to be cared for by her twin sister, Bonnie. As happened when Grandfather Yoder passed on, I first received the 'news' in a dream, and was awakened by an early morning phone call from my Mom telling me the sad news. This time, I was dreaming about eating, stopping between courses to say a prayer, which ended each time with an 'Amen.' It so happens that Betty had just finished her 'last meal' at a Denny's before she got back into the car and quietly passed away. " Our heartfelt condolences go out to both Phils and their families.

* The Doge of St. Louis (aka Chuck Lavazzi) reports, "I had yet another on-air set of interviews with some of the Crazy Guys on Sunday, October 18th. Specifically, I talked (separately) with The Two Phils. It was part of a special pledge drive edition of my show that featured 'The Firesign Theatre's Greatest Musical Hits' - basically, I focused on the musical bits from the albums. Anyone interested in copies can go through the same routine as before - send me two blank 60-minute cassettes and \$3 to cover postage and the purchase of a tape mailer to One Step Beyond, c/o FM88, 3504 Magnolia, St. Louis, MO 63110. Be advised that this show includes pledge breaks, but I guess one can always fast-forward past them." (You can also reach Chuck via his E-Mail address of clavazzi@nyx.cs.du.edu if you have any questions.)

.....

[[3]] "I Suppose You've Heard... the Voices?"

**Review of Midwest Radio Theater Workshop 1994 Oct. 17-22 - Stevens College Campus, Columbia, MO
By Jerry Stearns (jstearns@MTN.Org)**

.....

The Midwest Radio Theater Workshop has been offering an opportunity to learn and participate in production of live radio theater for 15 years. At first it was Wed-Thurs-Fri workshops and preparation, and Saturday a live performance. Now it is Tuesday-Friday workshops and prep, with Saturday's live broadcast. They hold a script contest each year, choosing three or four of the best scripts submitted for production. There are also smaller workshops during the year dealing with such things as writing for radio, acting, direction, and location recording. There were about 22 people hired as staff for this year's workshop. Some of the best producers, directors, and engineers and technical people working in the radio business. There were 43 paid attendees at the workshop, with some more from Columbia that came by to audition for parts. The staff for 1994 consisted of directors David Ossman, Sarah Montague, and Charles Potter, and Acting Coordinator and Host Phil Proctor. Sarah Montague has worked with the BBC, and now lives and works in New York. She is very British and delightfully witty and wry. Charles Potter teaches in the sound part of a film/video department at some New York university, and produces dramatized Louis L'Amour short stories on tape for Bantam, among other things.

Phil Proctor acted as host and writer for the continuity - the bits between the plays. He introduced Jack Benny and George Tirebiter for brief conversations that were really funny. He also was the "acting coordinator", who was there to help out with suggestions for acting or other performance questions.

I attended several workshop sessions in which Phil participated. One was on live sound effects. Sue Zizza of Hofstra's "The Radio Works," and Charles Potter were the presenters. I brought a box full of sound toys, and Phil spoke from his experience. "Mostly it's a process of problem solving." What sounds like the sound you want to make the listener think it is? Lots of Firesign examples popped up here. Few of the toys I brought along became useful for the performance. Instead the more mundane things of life were used, like the hatchet and entrenching tool I carry in my car all the time. I watched him during some "wild track" recording sessions, where they were taping crowd scenes for backgrounds. They would try to make a particular effect, and when it didn't work, Phil would say, "All right. Let's do this. It's called a 'pass-by'." And he would lead a line of speakers past the mike one at a time, to get the effect of people passing on the street. It worked, and solved a problem that several other attempts had not satisfied. It was really wonderful to see him pass on his experience to all of us.

Phil was also "On" most of the time. He was making jokes and plays-on-words in everything he did. Always playing, like a kid who is looking for attention. And yet, I would see him sitting at a table with lots going on around him, working on a script change

or organizing for a workshop session. He also brought a number of audio and video tapes for examples, and many of them he gave away at the end of the week. I got a copy of Proctor and Bergman's POWER, which I intend to get on the air here in Minneapolis at the first opportunity. Phil's alacrity with words and languages, his knowledge of how to make an acting situation work, and his enjoyment of talking with anyone who approached him, only increased the admiration and respect I already held for him as one of the 4 or 5 Crazy Guys. Phil took some time while at the workshop to search through the library archives at Stevens College, because his mother, Audre, attended there in 1933. He found her picture in a school yearbook, and a picture of her in a play she performed in that year. And, of course, he showed everybody what he'd found, and mentioned it in the material he wrote for the continuity. Very personal and personable.

Phil was also nice enough to tape some promo spots for my show back here in Minneapolis, with characters like Rocky Rococo, and Ralph Spoilsport, and of course, as himself. You bet I'll use them. David Ossman has attended 12 of the 15 MRTWs as a director and occasional performer. He has done a lot of teaching over the years, and knows how to organize material for a workshop so we can all pick up something useful. I have attended his Director As Producer session in the past, and found it immensely useful, and, of course, fun. I didn't go to that one this year, because I had been before and there was something else going on at the same time that I needed more. I did, however, attend David and Phil's "Writing Comedy" session. And I got it all on tape, too! It was really fun, and a terrific overview of audio comedy, with examples from Firesign, and Proctor's work with Bergman, and with Phil's wife Melinda Peterson. Phil talked a lot at this one, and David added commentary, color, and the concept of "repurposing", which deals with finding new ways to use everything you do - such as doing a radio show, and then editing it to sell on tape. Or rewriting a script as short stories, and etc. A good thing to keep in mind. At the end of this session, Phil chose a piece of mine to play as an example. It was really gratifying to sit and watch members of Firesign laugh at my work, and ask questions about how it came to be. It gives one a necessary energy to carry on, even when it is such lonely work. I thank them.

David is a consummate director. He knows what he wants, has a very tuned ear to hear it, and is really good with actors and others working on the performance. He was (as were they all) very patient as we ran through plays in each stage of preparation, working with each of us to perform our part to the best of our ability, and coordinate them all into a whole that flowed. A real treat to observe, and learn from. I hope sometime to be more involved directly in one of his plays there - writing one that he chooses to direct, or playing a voice part in one.

At one point during the week, a local TV News reporter (Channel 8 is NBC, and also part of the U of MO, so the reporter was a student) came down to do a story on the workshop. Naturally they aimed her at David, as someone well known and articulate on the subject. They interviewed him for a half-hour or so. Then he turned around and pointed at us, the Foley sound effects guys who were sorting noise makers on the stage, and said they should talk to us. So they did that for a few minutes. And then they went on to tape other things and people. That night, Channel 8 aired about two minutes about MRTW, with brief bites from David,

and from Kris and I. As of this writing, a week after it happened, I have not seen the TV report myself, but I heard from someone who did that they supered names under each person talking, and got David's and mine mixed up. So I was David Ossman for a few seconds in Columbia. Cool. I have made an attempt to get assistance in obtaining a copy of that video tape. I won't know for a while if my accomplice was successful.

It was also fun to meet others that I had met before only on the net. Like John Weber, from Last Minute Productions, the makers of the current "Hayward Sanitarium" airing on NPR Playhouse. I recommend MRTW to any of you who would like to learn more about live radio theater production. Be prepared to work hard and long, and to enjoy it.

(Jerry Stearns is the producer of SOUND AFFECTS: A Radio Playground, heard on KFAI, 90.3 FM, Minneapolis, MN.)



[[4]] Dear Friends...



At this point I'd like to acknowledge, and give a free plug to, the many FAlaFal readers who've sent me copies of their own varied publications (while I do appreciate getting your stuff and keeping up with the "zine scene," time and space do not permit me to make this a regular column here):

We start off with Rick Namey's wonderful and hilarious new "Rush Limburgher" parody book, Buy This Book And Make Me Rich, available at any major bookstore with a decent sense of humor (St. Martin's Press, \$4.99 retail) and sorely needed in our current Republican-dominated- Congress situation...

If you're a discriminating TV watcher (or, more accurately, like to make snide comments back to the tube, especially during the insipid commercials), Adbusters Quarterly is a must-read. Founder Cat Simril Ishikawa and friends combine guerrilla activism with snappy graphics to give you your money's worth; it's \$18 for a 4-issue subscription - Canadians please add GST - to The Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 1B7...

One of the better Mystery Science Theater 3000 zines around is Crow's Nest, run by Joy Jenkins and her husband Dave, chock full of in-depth looks at cheesy movies and the people who mock them so cleverly (including yours truly, a sometime CN staff writer). Well worth the \$1.50 to P.O. Box 3825, Evansville, IN 47736-3825...

Phil Snyder is one of the most articulate zine editors I've ever "met." He's put out lots of stuff with his partner, Gina Amann, but among the best is Eyewash (the more photographic-minded among you will also love The Eleventh Pin). Phil never prices his publications, so send him lots of money 'cause he's a great guy (and I'm not just saying this because a future issue of Eyewash will feature a nice plug for Firesign and FAlaFal). His address is Cyclone Publications, P.O. Box 20013, Dayton, OH 45420-0013...

The most thorough and indispensable zine reference quarterly (or is it bimonthly?), Factsheet Five, is in full swing again with the

passing of the baton from former editor Mike Gunderloy to R. Seth Friedman. Each FF tome takes a long time to read through, but it's worth it - you wouldn't believe what a vast "underground" publishing world is out there until you look at this thing! Highly recommended, and a bargain at \$6 an issue (\$20 for a six-issue subscription), which you should send to P.O. Box 170099, San Francisco, CA 94117-0099...

If you're a fan of Rocky and Bullwinkle or any of the other Jay Ward Studios creations, you should be subscribing to The Frostbite Falls Far-Flung Flier, which always gives FAlaFal super plugs and is available at \$10 for four issues, to be sent to Gary David at P.O. Box 39, Macedonia, OH 44056-0039...

Another large and worthwhile publication, Gray Areas, not only catalogs zines but also takes a look at, well, "the gray areas of life," things that many might consider slightly illegal or immoral or just plain strange, but which fascinate the rest of us. Netta Gilboa started out, apparently, with mostly Grateful Dead fandom, and has really branched out nicely into many areas of interest. Also quite recommended (and Netta promises to give FAlaFal a plug soon!), it's \$5 an issue (\$18 for a 4-issue subscription), sent to Gray Areas, Inc., P.O. Box 808, Broomall, PA 19008-0808...

David Wellen has been sending me Joe Hampton's Mosquito Magazine, it seems, forever. This little pamphlet (an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet folded over once to make four pages of tiny print) contains news about David's band The Kingpins and whatever other stuff David thinks will amuse. His address is Vacuum Books, P.O. Box 2355, Southampton, NY 11869...

It may not be my cuppa, but there are certainly enough fans of raunchy, "politically incorrect" humor out there, and Howard Stern regular Jackie "The Joke Man" Martling's self-promo publication Jokeland Newsletter is sure to appeal to them. The newsletter appears free, but Jackie's catalog costs \$3; inquire at Off Hour Rockers, Box 62, East Norwich, NY 11732...

Still going strong after all this time, the current issue of The Realist by long-time Firesign friend (who's collaborated countless times with Peter Bergman) Paul Krassner features bits by and about Robert Anton Wilson, Tim Leary, John Bobbitt, O.J. Simpson, and the usual suspects; must reading for fans of political and media satire, and available from Paul for \$12 for 6 issues, \$23 for 12 from Dept. 128, Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294...

From the folks at Best Brains, who produce the aforementioned MST3K, comes Satellite News, their house newsletter. If you don't watch the show, you won't (and probably shouldn't) get the newsletter. If you send BB \$5 to become a member of the fan club, you get a free sub to this quarterly newsletter, which is quite a bargain. The address is P.O. Box 5325, Hopkins, MN 55343...

If you like conspiracy theories, underground comix and skepticism in general, you'll probably send Stuart Appleton a buck for his Seeds for Thought pamphlet (basically a 4-page newspaper). His last known address was Box 694, Silver Springs, FL 32688...

Bjo Trimble scours the science fiction, fantasy and other media to gather news for her Space- Time Continuum. If media fandom is your thing, you owe it to yourself to send her a SASE at 2059 Fir Springs Drive, Kingswood, TX 77339...

If you know of and like Greg Kinnear, especially if you're female, Talk Soup: The Newsletter is a must. Lisa "Gilda" Jablonsky, dot matrix printer and all, does a better job with this than the editors of all those David Cassidy droolzines I used to get as a teenager. If you're interested, write her at 9699 Sycamore Canyon Road, Moreno Valley, CA 92557...

For those Discordians among you (and Hail Eris, whoever you all are), Tsujigiri (translated as classical Japanese for "to try out one's new sword on a chance wayfarer") by Greg Carden definitely belongs in your collection. Fascinating ramblings on life as play and other deep thoughts; well worth reading during excremeditation. Greg's at 501 Kirkwood Drive, Northport, AL 35476...

I've never heard of "Diplomacy" fandom, even though Garret Schenck tried to explain it to me and one of my former acquaintances apparently started the whole thing. If you know what it is, or are presumably interested in finding out more about it, perhaps Garret's zine Upstart can help. Lots of maps, lots of initials, lots of what appear to be battle plans - I'm obviously missing something, but Garret says he sends out "novice packages" as well. Write him at 394 Fifth Street, Brooklyn, NY 11315-2087...

I'm not sure quite how to describe the new magazine VERBIVORE, full of fascinating and creative essays on food and culture. Only one factual error (Sagittarius is, of course, a fire sign, not an air sign) and I wish it were larger, but I highly recommend it, and editor Jeremy Braddock will be doing an article about TFT for issue #2. It's \$2 to 532 LaGuardia Place, Suite 573, New York, NY 10012...

Lastly, no Nick Danger and Hemlock Stones fan's collection would be complete without a smattering from the ZBS Foundation, presenters of the Travels with Jack series, Ruby, Dinotopia and much more. For their newest (free) Audio Adventures Catalog, write them at RR 1, Box 1201, Fort Edward, NY 12828.

[[5]] HOW MANY BENDABLE INTEGRATED COMMUNITY WORKERS?

A Call for Firesign Theatre Quiz Questions

Richard Arnold, a regular contributor to the Firesign newsgroup on the 'net, is developing a Firesign Theatre Quiz for publication in future issues of FAlaFal, as part of a contest. This contest will be run over successive issues of FAlaFal, and we hope to award prizes to the contestant with the most correct answers.

Do you have some really tough questions that you think will beat the reaper? If so, send them along with the answers to me or

email them to Richard at rarnold@clark.net, by March 30, 1995! We hope to run the quiz in FAlaFal #s 26 through 30, to feature only questions from Electrician, How Can You Be..., Dwarf, Bozos and Everything You Know Is Wrong (one album per issue). If this first five-part "round" garners enthusiasm, Richard promises a sequel with questions from other albums.

So do your part today, Joe. Join with millions of your friends and neighbors and turn in those quiz questions!

**[[6]] Entertainment Trading Company
Purveyors of Fine Firesign Merchandise
7510 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 160
Los Angeles, CA 90046**

T-Shirts:

Nick Danger: Third Eye - 2-Sided (specify black or white)
Front: The (in)famous Nick Danger profile
Back: REGNAD KCIN on door \$23.00
25th Anniversary Tour T-shirts
Updated Dwarf album cover picture 15.00
"25th Anniversary Tour" sketch 15.00

Other Stuff:

"Firehead" Cap (5/C, specify black or white) 12.00
Nick Danger Shot Glasses (set of two) 14.00
Rocky Rococo's Pickle (w/ paper bag) 5.00
Bozo Nose 5.00
25th Anniversary Sweatshirts (white, 6/C) 32.00
25th Anniversary Tour Jackets (black, 6/C) 63.00
Postage and Handling 5.25
8.25% Sales Tax (CA residents only)
Sizes available for shirts/jackets (specify): L, XL, XXL
Cap, sweatshirts & jacket are all embroidered
Send check or money order to address above, or call Jim Henry at 1-800-699-ROCK. CAVEAT EMPTOR! Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

**MORE SUGAR^(TM) from Firesign Theatre
c/o Duplicating Plus
611 Empire Mill Road, Bloomington, IN 47401
(To order by credit card, call 1-800-934-1612)**

**AUDIO: ANYTHYNGE YOU WANT TO
(SHAKESPEARE'S LOST COMEDIE)**

Four goodly Yanks on ye Bearde of ye Bard. Classickal Comick prerequisite for all Ye Majors of ye Olde English Litte and Ye Minors of Ye New American Trippe; once lost and now restored to us as it was. Like unto that performed in excerpts during this summer's Toure de Farce. NOTE: This is the restored, uncut, letterbox version, as originally produced for broadcast, including material and performances never before released on recordings.
1 Cassette \$ 8.50

Dear Elayne, 9/2/94

VIDEO: EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS WRONG

Hello, Seekers! There are 8 million stories in the Naked Trailer Park, and here are Four or Five of them. Delight in watching this sharp, clean print as Happy Harry Cox goes to the Inter-Galactic Alien Friendship Convention, meets Art Wholeflaffer, and finds Reebus Caneebus on the brink of a Nude Age landmark that could become the Earth Hole Catalog. Remember, There's a Seeker Born Every Minute!

1 VHS Video \$19.95

PLEASE ADD \$4.00 SHIPPING & HANDLING to every order
See the latest Lodestone catalog for more information!

.....
**Firesignia Available Exclusively from
SPARKS MEDIA**

**P.O. Box 3540
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
616-363-8231**
.....

AUDIO

DOWN UNDER DANGER: A Nick Danger Adventure (Written by and Starring Phil Austin; 1994) - Nick tackles a case involving the disappearance of the continent of Australia, a boxing kangaroo named Jojo and more Danger than you can shake a fist at.

1 Cassette \$ 9.50 ppd

**THE GEORGE TIREBITER STORY, Chapter 1 aka
Another Christmas Carol**

(Written by and Starring David Ossman; 1989)

1 Cassette \$ 8.95 ppd

**RADIODAZE, featuring "The New Adventures of Mark
Time," "Max Morgan: Crime Cabby" and "Young Tom
Edison"**

(Written by and Starring David Ossman; 1989)

1 Cassette \$ 8.95 ppd

VIDEO

AN AUTOBOZOGRAPHICAL EVENING

A one-man show including Firesign video bits and a special prepared version of "Poems for Two Voices"

(Starring David Ossman; 1986)

1 VHS Video \$15.95 ppd

RADIOPLAY

A documentary on the making of a David Ossman radio show (Starring David Ossman; 1989)

1 VHS Video \$15.95 ppd

All programs produced by SPARKS MEDIA

Please make all checks payable to "Sparks"

Michigan residents add 6% sales tax
.....

[[7]] Postmark: Deep Space
.....

This letter is serving both as a letter of comment and as a mailing list request... The release of the live album from last years 25th anniversary tour has me remembering my experience at the performance in Washington, DC. The live album has recordings from that performance, but I wonder how interesting it might be to hear them. I had expected some audience participation. Firesign creates a certain kind of fan, in a similar way to Monty Python. There is a limited amount of material which has been around for over two decades. Their audience has listened to that material numerous times, to the point of memorization, because of a lack of new material. I am like that, and I wasn't even born when their first albums were released. However, when I attend a live performance I understand that I am paying money to hear a professional perform. Yet at times it appeared that the audience wasn't going to let them. It added 10 minutes to the beginning of Nick Danger, as FT would pause and try to move on in the performance along. A small amount of audience shouts would have been enjoyable. For instance Principal Poop's Pep Rally, or even singing along with any of the songs. However, the way things were going, it was interrupting the performance.

Now the bulk of the audience had no problem. Everyone was enjoying themselves. And except for one particular member in the front, FT had no problems. For me though, I wanted to let the guys do their thing. I can recite along in the privacy of my own home. I don't really know why I am bringing this up a year after the fact, but I would wonder what others thought of this aspect of the experience. Was it an integral part of the enjoyment of the performance? Or was it akin to someone jumping on stage and trying to jam with the band? I think I'm somewhere towards that later.

Enjoy the newsletter, even though I'll never hear half the radio things the guys are doing these days. I'm just waiting for them to re-release all the albums I haven't heard to death, or have never heard at all.

CHRIS DAY
Chicago, IL

.....
Hello fellow Bozos! September 12, 1994

I received issue #23... Along with two friends, I was fortunate enough to see the November 6, 1993 show at the Orpheum Theatre in Boston, which according to Austin was one of the first shows where the FST began to "click" onstage. His van with the killer attack dogs was parked outside the theatre for all to behold, and Phil gave me a hard time (good natured, of course) during the "Funway" sequence for wearing my nose on the beak of my hat instead of on my nose. One of my friends was unable to make the show as he was on a business trip to GOSHEN INDIANA (I'm no crazed Sterno bum, that's where he was, and I have a GOSHEN INDIANA T-shirt to prove it) (they sell them at the local Wal-Mart).

The show was great, with lots of improvisational work especially during Nick Danger. We couldn't stay after the show to meet the 4 or 5 Crazy Guys, as our parking garage closed early, but are planning to see them again... I also received the EYKIW video and wanted to make a correction to what you said in #23. There

are actually two missing sequences - the crow sequence which you mentioned plus "Occult in Your Head" with Nino from "Side 2." The video is definitely bizarre, especially the "Government Training Film" (listen carefully!).

Since becoming a "Firehead" in 1970 I've managed to turn on many of my friends to the Theatre. I'm still waiting for the promised cable TV special (they said something about filming one of the shows). Any further info on that?

Well, I must go where the bozos go. Later. (The later the better!)

CRAIG SEUFERT

New Hampton, NH

(I don't believe any of the '93 or '94 shows were filmed for cable television, but perhaps the guys will set something up in February.)

Greetings, Elayne!

(in answer to my question about his wonderful comic book of a few years back) Chuck Dixon and I go back to the old days of contributing to the same fanzines, and "Radio Boy" was one of the most fun things I've ever worked on. The idea of creating a fictitious king of Japanese comics (Hawiya Nistamicha) was mine, and the text page biography I wrote about him was definitely Firesign-inspired, as I love bogus/satirical/parody history of pop culture, and have always loved their text history in "Big Mystery Joke Book," and have probably read that section in particular twenty times.

My old "Comic Reader" strip, "Dick Duck, Duck Dick" (which was, naturally, about a detective duck) also draws its inspiration (at least as far as its title) from TFT as well, since it's sort of a knockoff of Dick Private, Private Dick. That name I'd read in that same history, although I never heard of Roller Maidens 'til a coupla months ago, it being one of the albums I never owned (probably because of the "racy" cover) as a kid.

In fact, I was sort of startled to re-remember that that character was what had inspired Dick Duck's name, particularly because the record rather disturbed me and offended my religious sensibilities. As a Christian, that aspect of their work has probably been the only drawback for me in following their stuff.

At the Chicago 25th reunion concert, they commented from the stage that there was nobody under 40 in the audience, and they also expressed amazement that Rush Limbaugh could be a fan of theirs. Well, I'm under 40 (37 at this writing) and would probably be regarded as very conservative, so I guess there are a few of us out there.

Actually, it was cartooning that first drew me to TFT... As a kid and as a kid who studied and researched the books, movies, albums, etc. pertaining to all the comedy greats, I haunted the comedy section in the record departments quite a bit. I was really attracted to Robert Grossman's cover on Dwarf, in a big way. I didn't then know what airbrushing was, I just loved this cover that almost looked like rubber dolls or something... so colorful and cool.

Anyway, I was a freshman in high school, and not knowing what or who they/it was, I couldn't bring my 14-year-old self to shell out the money for such an unknown quantity... Then one day in the art room at school, I heard two senior guys talking, and one was asking the other if he'd ever heard "The Firesign Theatre" and saying how funny their records were.

This overhead "endorsement" (from a guy, I must add, whom I normally wouldn't trust to recommend anything) was all I needed to push me over the brink and make the purchase - that great cover plus funny stuff inside!

Of course, after hearing it, I wasn't sure what I'd heard, it was so totally unlike anything I'd encountered before (or since), but I sure liked it, and of course added most all of their stuff from before and after...

At the Chicago show I'd brought along a big Columbia cardboard promo poster of "the guys" I'd had for about 20 years, planning to bribe an usher to get me backstage for autographs. To my delight, they were signing after the show, and I got it autographed (Proctor: "Gee, this is in much better shape than the one I've got!")...

Dig you later

JIM ENGEL

Lombard, IL

Dear Elayne, October 6, 1994

I had just cooled off the tropical fishes and checked on the meduda rolls when the mail came in. There among the coupons for Dead Cat Soap, Bear Whiz Beer, etc. was copy #24 of the FIRESIGNal. It's such a gas to receive this jazzy document! I called Dr. Benway right away to have him let the inmates know there really is something worth reading in the mail these days!

I was thrilled to be able to see 4or5 Krazy Guys at the Britt Festival in Jacksonville, OR this past July. The wife and I thoroughly enjoyed the entire show and joined in the recitation as often as possible. After the show we got the guys to sign a black & white glossy (as I hadn't thought to bring an album cover) and even Dave's son Orson signed it. We'll treasure it forever.

Please keep this publication going. It has made my year.

You haven't heard the last of me,

TOM HEATH

Phoenix, OR

Dear Elayne, October 18, 1994

It really suxx that Mobile Fi isn't going to be issuing TFT's product any more. There go my hopes of seeing How Time Flies and In The Next World... on something other than scratchy 20-year-old vinyl. Of course all the existing MoFi titles are going to become RARE COLLECTOR'S ITEMS which'll cost an arm and a leg to buy. Since I need at least two of 'em for my collection, that means I won't be able to walk home or operate my CD

player once I've paid for 'em. Actually, I telephoned Mobile Fi yesterday to hopefully get a promo copy of the 25th Anniversary disc for the college/community radio station where I DJ and create other mischief, WHRW. What they told me was that they were getting out of the conventional aluminum-plated CD business (the TFT disc is reportedly their last title in that line) and concentrating exclusively on their gold Ultradiscs, and a new line of Ultra-High-Quality LP's (go figure)...Who's reissuing Fighting Clowns, by the bye? How about Eat or Be Eaten and Give Us A Break? Lotsa luck to the boys' efforts to reissue Roller Maidens.... Hope I don't have to buy a \$29.95 gold disc in order to hear it. (See this issue's News section for information on the current and possibly future state of Firesign CD's.)

I can empathize with Phil Proctor. The "backlot" syndrome is setting in 3,000 miles away in my hometown. There are no high-Richter earthquakes here in Broome County NY, just all-American bonehead urban (non-)planning. In the mid-'70s most of downtown Binghamton was bulldozed for a mall to end all malls, which only got built in 1981 in massively scaled-down form after years of political jiggery-pokery during which most of a formerly vital downtown was left looking like Hiroshima after the Enola Gay paid its visit and a mall developer from New Jersey erected the edifice which has long since become the hub of retail activity here (was there a connection?). Last month a local supermarket chain demolished half of my old neighborhood to make way for a new mega-market which will be two-thirds parking lot. This only ten years after they demolished much of the other half for their CURRENT supermarket...

A year or so back, the great retail locust Wal-Mark set up shop in a huge new strip mall with a Loew's 10-plex AND a Sam's club in our suburb of Vestal where many IBM-ers live, although recently Big Blue has decided to downsize. Of course I shop there. Where else will I go? Local retailers? What are those? (By the way, is Saturday Afternoon Journal a magazine or a book, and where can I get it?) (ED. NOTE: Phil describes it as "a local literary rag" available "at local bookstores such as St. Marks in NYC and City Lights in SF, for \$6.00, or by mail for \$7.50: SATURDAY AFTERNOON JOURNAL, 3090 Lake Hollywood Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90068. The editor is Cynthia Walker, who's married to David Sheffield, a renowned screenwriter and SNL alum. He wrote and performed the `Virtual Davis Junior' skit in the first Digital Diner show (introduced by yours truly, Buddy De Mort) and is represented by a very funny piece I also appear in, about Catch-and-Release whalers [on the second DigDiner show].")

Keep 'em flying, PAUL GOLDSCHMIDT
Johnson City, NY

P.S. My condolences for you and Gypsy Doctor. The darkest moments of 1993 for Laura and I was watching our orange tabby Mehitabel (who we had since her kittenhood and who I named after hearing Rosalie Sorrels' tune about the cartoon kitty) die of some kind of wasting illness whose name the vets never told us; they only said she didn't have anything our other cats could catch. Even in her last days, she gave us lots of affection. She used to cuddle up to me on the sofa as I watched Star Trek:TNG or DS9. We still miss her.

Dear Elayne, October 20, 1994

I want to take this moment to really thank you for seeing that I receive Four-Alarm FIRESIGNAL #24. You really went out of your way to make sure that I got my issue and I really appreciate that. I have loved FAlaFal ever since I received my first issue! Speaking for my brother and I, we think that your newsletter is fantastic!!!!

My brother received his a number of weeks ago so I knew that they had made it out (hooray!). I had already grabbed the electronic version a number of weeks before he received his hard copy version, so I wasn't too upset. But I still wanted to be able to read and order goodies from my hard copy. Since I had moved in August, I knew that that might be a problem, so I wasn't going to complain. Besides, I had the e-version so, no sweat. But since I'm the collector that I am, I still wanted to have the printed version. You made sure that I got my FIRESIGNAL and I really appreciate that! I would have never expected that in a million years.

Keith and I have been Firesign Theatre fans ("Firehead" just doesn't cut it) for years now. I purchased my first two records at a pawn shop for 25 cents! I listened to EYKIW for the first time that night and was floored. I called my brother to come in and listen to this fantastic piece of comedy and he was instantly hooked as well!

After I discovered the Mobile Fidelity CDs, I became a true believer!

I am quite disappointed that Sony won't renew their license with MF (I had better get "Killer Clowns" while I still can!). I am quite excited that FT is alive and wonderful as ever. I am also grateful that, along with Jim, Roger, & Jamie, you help keep us fans informed and <insert FT quote here>. I am very proud to be associated with the "Fireheads" and especially with you. It's very nice to see that somebody gives a shit.

May you always be known as the head Firehead. The Firehead Head, etc...

Thank You again Elayne!

Be Seeing You, ERIC E. JOHNSON
Davis, CA

Dear Elayne,

I'm a long-time fan of the Firesign Theatre but have been stuck in Germany since 1982, where I work as a translator. So, I've been listening to my old LPs until my ears fall off and haven't known until now where I could turn for comfort.

Just to give you an indication: a few years ago I wrote to a one-time fan club whose address was printed, I think, on the inside cover of the Forward into the Past album (first and only time I ever wrote any fan mail in my life). The address was a P.O. Box in Santa Barbara (something to do with Edison). (That would be the Young Tom Edison club out of DO's old haunts.) Anyway, the album was almost ten years old at the time I sent the letter, so you can imagine how hopeful I must have been to get a reply. My letter came back a few months later: address unknown.

Now, I'm very pleased to have downloaded your newsletter - even if I can't attend any of the performances (do the guys ever plan a European tour?) and have virtually no access to any of the materials. At least I did order the anniversary CD from Mobile and the cassettes from More Sugar. Knowing you all are out there makes me feel not quite so alone in the world (you can imagine how wild the Germans are about American comedy in media other than dubbed television series).

Well, I'd just like to ask you how I might obtain some more recordings or books, transcriptions, videos etc. I think I have all the commercially available albums up to Eat or Be Eaten (including the Nick Danger pieces and Lawyer's Hospital, a personal favorite). But, what about other recordings that didn't make it to the record shops back then (off air, bootleg etc.), or the Proctor & Bergman solo projects that I've never seen for sale anywhere, or records that have been released since the early eighties? What about books, magazines and transcriptions (which would be great to have for some of the literary pieces that are so hard to follow)? I'll even take videos and promise never to channel hop!

I'd greatly appreciate any advice you can give me on how to acquire any of the above and look forward to the next installment of your wonderful newsletter.

Yours, CHRIS ERSKINE
Bad Bramsted, GERMANY



[[8]] "Oh Blinding Light..." by Phil Proctor



One of the hipper free weeklies around now is New York Press, and one of its better columns is Cecil Adams' "The Straight Dope" which, as some Fireheads have already pointed out to me, tends to reference Firesign on more than one occasion. Phil knows it too - says he, "This is the text of a note I sent [to Cecil, c/o NY Press, The Buck Bldg., 295 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012] in response to queries regarding the "ability" to turn lights on and off by thought alone ... Thought you'd all be interested.

Subject: Lights Out!!

Dear Friends:

I am a member of the Firesign Theatre comedy group as well as Proctor & Bergman, and during almost three decades of national touring, I have had many occasions to experience the light control phenomenon.

The first mysterious manifestation dates back to an overcast morning in the early seventies in my home on Sunset Plaza drive in L.A. when, looking over at a light in the kitchen, I thought to myself, "I really should turn that on," at which instant the neon fixture in question did indeed flicker on -- witnessed by my partner Peter Bergman, who was there to discuss our next performance on the road.

From that time forward, even to this very day, lights have been going on and off around me, although I could not say that I have any real conscious control over the effect.

There are too many examples to document, but almost all of them have been witnessed, and a psychic friend of mine, who incidentally correctly predicted that Peter and I would be involved in the "Golden Dragon Massacre" (5 dead, eleven wounded) in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1975, claims that my manifestations are related to contact from extra-terrestrials. . . but that's another story.

Here follows a sampling of some of the more intriguing occurrences:

In New York City, walking to lunch with my mother and telling her about the light incidents, a streetlamp suddenly turned on as we passed underneath it, and this was in the middle of a sunny day.

When I related some events to some friends in their home in Beverly Hills, the table lamp by their bed unexpectedly went on and could not be extinguished until it turned itself off some time later.

I shared the kitchen-light experience with a radio talk show host from Texas who was at a party at my home and demonstrated to her that it was operated by a common push-button switch. About 5 minutes after she'd left, I was complaining to my wife that it hadn't turned on while she was there -- and it inexplicably turned off! By the way, the unit in question -- a built-in light on a classic old gas range, never again repeated this odd behavior.

I was staying at an eccentric old hotel in New York recommended by Dudley Moore, and after coming back from lunch with Peter and Dr. Andrei Puharich (further investigating the "Alien Connection" for our comedy act), my key would not allow me re-entrance to my room. A house detective was sent up, and after at least a half an hour trying various passkeys, he had to, in effect, pick the lock to gain access. Once inside, we saw that a ceiling light had been left on, perhaps by the cleaning woman; but the detective told me that whoever had been in that room had locked the door by throwing a deadbolt FROM THE INSIDE and then -- what -- disappeared?

And lastly -- for now, at least -- when I went to see a screening of ET at the Writers Guild Theatre in Beverly Hills, I was talking about this whole light/alien flap with another friend and as I pulled up to park under a streetlamp, it went out. Furthermore, while we were watching the film, there was, as I was told later, a partial BLACKOUT in the Beverly Hills area.

To a great extent, the light experiences have been mostly supplanted by a new oddity -- finding coins everywhere! It started with pennies -- connected to a play I did at the Mark Taper Forum called MUZEEKA by John Guare, in which I "sang the penny" in role of Jack Argue -- but that's REALLY another story...a penny for my thoughts?

the enemy missiles flew overhead they'd JUST TURN OFF!
Wouldn't it be great? I knew you'd agree.

Of course, there'd be the little matter of thousands of pounds of plutonium falling out of the sky on us. Maybe I'd better think about this some more...

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

.....
[[9]] See You On the Funway...
.....

The Christmas season is upon us down here at the world headquarters of Monrovia Communications, and I can now allow myself the pleasure of wallowing in one of my favorite pastimes: kicking back in the Barcalounger with a lap-full of catalogs and one of Frederick, Maryland's own Blue Ridge Cranberry Noels (that's a BEER, son, and a damned good one, too) at my elbow. Yes, there's just nothing like the pure burst of gift-giving fantasia that occurs when you indulge yourself by lazily perusing the offerings of L. L. Bean, J. G. Hook, and (especially) Victoria's Secret. It's what Christmas was meant to be.

And best of all, in the coming days I'll actually be ordering things from these sirens of capitalism, then waiting eagerly for the "present man" (as my 7- and 4-year olds call the UPS representative) to drop them at my door. Unfortunately for me, my wife is a home-based technical writing consultant, and will no doubt intercept every one of my orders before I can hide them -- but in the end it'll be harder on her because of the temptation those little brown-wrapped Pandora's boxes represent.

Do you remember the end of the Ren & Stimpy "Space Madness" episode where Stimpy is assigned to guard the "history eraser" button? It'll be like that, though hopefully it won't end up the same way.

I really enjoyed Phil Proctor's tidbit on the mental control of lighting fixtures. I too have this power -- but unlike Phil, I have learned to CONTROL it. Well, mostly. It's hard to do, and I can't always make it happen on demand, but I do know what the trick is.

It's like this: first I pick out a likely-looking streetlamp (most any fluorescent or neon fixture will do, and streetlamps are usually handy), and then I concentrate on focusing energy along my spine. There's a certain tingling I get in my spinal cord when I'm doing it right, and if I concentrate really hard I can usually get the tingling to build until, with a slight shrug of my shoulders, I hurl an energy bolt toward the light. If I've done it all correctly, the light will go out (or on, depending) at the instant of release.

Far more often though, the scenario is that I'm bouncing in my car to some hot jazz by Dave Sanborn or Pieces of a Dream, and just as I drive under the light, it goes out (or on, etc).

Coincidence? I think not. Larry Niven once said that only those who think they have a psychic power believe in them, but I think that's just stating the obvious. I mean, if you drive a really hot car, don't you think that it's REALLY COOL to have it? What's the difference?

Personally, I think the military should exploit this unforeseen, yet widespread, power of U.S. citizens. Who needs Star Wars when you could just position the most powerful "electric disruptor resources" (that's us) at strategic points along the border, and as